



North
Carolina
Sandhills
Safe
Harbor
Program

Safe Harbor News

Safe Harbor Landowners permanently protect habitat!

SOUTHERN PINES, NC, February 2, 2004 -- The Nature Conservancy today announced the purchase of two conservation easements in Hoke County: a 543-acre conservation easement from Julian and Margaret Johnson of June Johnson Road, Raeford, NC; and a 146-acre conservation easement from Jean E. Powell of Raeford.

The easements protect outstanding examples of longleaf pine forest and important habitat along Rockfish and Juniper Creeks. Protecting the banks of Rockfish Creek will benefit water quality for communities in southern and eastern Hoke County. Both properties border Calloway Forest, a 2400-acre Nature Conservancy preserve. The lands provide habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species native to the Sandhills that needs mature longleaf pine forests to survive. The NC Sandhills has the second largest population of the red-cockaded woodpecker in the world. Other unique Sandhills features include the fox squirrel, Bachman's Sparrow and Sandhills Pixie moss.

Both the Johnson property and the Powell property have been enrolled in the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Safe Harbor program since June of 2000. Safe Harbor is a voluntary program that benefits endangered species by giving landowners incentives to improve their habitat and provides assurances to the landowners limiting additional future restrictions related to the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Both the Johnson and Powell properties adjoin the Fort Bragg Military Reservation. Their protection will ensure that one and a half miles of boundary along the base will remain a wooded buffer

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Abandoned Red-cockaded Woodpecker Cluster near West End is reactivated



A previously abandoned red-cockaded woodpecker cluster located near West End was recently found to be active. Cluster MOOR 35 has been abandoned (no evidence of red-cockaded woodpecker activity) since it was first discovered in 1984 but upon inspection of the cavity trees in early 2004 it was found to have an active, recently completed cavity. A solitary male has taken up residence in the cluster which is just over 4 1/2 miles away from the nearest known active cluster. The bird that reactivated cluster MOOR 35 is a banded bird from a cluster on the southwest portion of Fort Bragg approximately 16 miles away. The cavity trees within this cluster are located just mere feet away from a Safe Harbor property where the landowner has been doing extensive burning for a number of years in order to restore the longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem. The landowner that owns the property where the cavity trees are located is in the process of enrolling in the North Carolina Sandhills Safe Harbor Program.

for Army training activities.

"We have been working with The Nature Conservancy on this easement for a couple years and are glad to see this arrangement finalized," said Johnson. "It allows us to continue to make a living off the land in a way that sustains our resources while benefiting wildlife and open space. We feel that this is a great alternative to the land use issues that have received so much attention lately."

**Safe Harbor
Agreements
86 Landowners
45,691 acres**

The lands will continue to be owned by the Johnsons and Ms. Powell who will continue to pay property taxes to Hoke County. The properties may be sold or passed down to heirs, but the restrictions will forever run with the title. The restrictions prevent the land from being developed or subdivided, except for 2 houses which may be built for the heirs or successors of the Johnsons and one house on Ms. Powell's land. The easements allow for the sustainable harvest of forest products such as timber and pine straw, as well as traditional uses such as hunting and fishing. The forests cannot be clearcut but will be managed for long-term sustainable production of timber, pine straw and wildlife habitat.

The North Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and its 27,000 members have protected more than 500,000 acres in the Tar Heel state. Its mission is to preserve plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy is working with other state, local and federal partners in the Sandhills to protect the longleaf pine ecosystem. For more information, contact the NC Chapter's office in Southern Pines at 910.246.0300. On the web at nature.org/northcarolina.

Nuisance Canada Goose Control

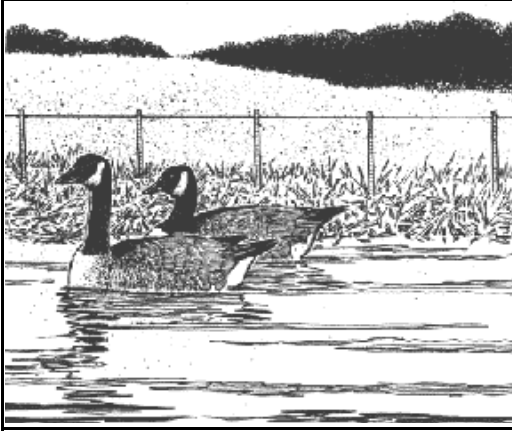
Reprinted as written by Joesph Fuller. Illustration by David Williams

Three distinct populations of Canada geese can be found in North Carolina at various times of the year. Two groups are migratory and are found in North Carolina only during the fall and winter. The Atlantic population breeds in Northern Quebec and winters in the northeastern part of the state. The Southern James Bay population breeds in Ontario and can be found widely scattered in the upper coastal plain, piedmont, and foothills. Both migratory populations are declining in number. Conversely, our resident population is increasing and stays in North Carolina year round. Resident geese are found throughout the state with the largest numbers occurring in the piedmont and northeastern part of the state.

These resident Canada geese mean many things to many different people. Observing the graceful flight of a flock of geese swinging into a farm pond or neighborhood lake, watching a pair successfully nest and raise a brood of goslings, or simply listening to the unmistakable call of the Canada goose delights many people. The temperament and visibility of resident Canada geese afford people a close look at one of nature's creatures.

Resident Canada geese also create problems for many people. As both human and resident Canada goose populations have increased in North Carolina, conflicts have occurred. Most people can tolerate and in fact enjoy a few Canada geese; however, as numbers increase problems are usually not far behind. Congregations of Canada geese can cause problems by overgrazing lawns and golf courses while leaving large accumulations of feathers and droppings. Health concerns are realistic when large numbers of geese congregate at water treatment facilities and swimming areas. Resident Canada geese may also cause

Nuisance Canada Goose Control con't



destruction of vegetable gardens or commercially grown agricultural crops such as corn, peanuts, and soybeans.

Like all native waterfowl and other migratory birds, Canada geese are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and various state and federal laws. In accordance with these laws it is unlawful to hunt, kill, sell, purchase, or possess migratory birds, except as permitted by regulations adopted on an annual basis by the Secretary of the Interior. Harassment of geese to disperse them at problem areas is permissible. Currently there are closed hunting seasons in North Carolina for both migratory populations. Resident Canada geese can be hunted throughout much of the state during a special season in September, before migratory birds arrive.

General Considerations for Resident Goose Control

The loss of wariness of resident Canada geese to people often makes goose control very difficult. While there are a variety of techniques used to disperse geese from problem areas, each is met with varying degrees of success. Of the various methods described herein, keep in mind that some techniques will work for some groups of geese and have no effect on others. General guidelines include:

1. Discontinue feeding or any other unnecessary activity that may be attracting geese. Don't give geese a reason to be there. Feeding concentrates birds, conditions birds to be less wary of humans, and renders most dispersal techniques ineffective. Canada geese are very capable of finding their own forage, making well intentioned hand-outs unnecessary.
2. Try different dispersal methods, perhaps 2 or 3 at the same time.
3. Be persistent. It may take a while. Initial efforts need to be continuous and may require a round-the-clock commitment. Ineffective harassment may be counter productive by training the birds to be non-responsive.
4. It is more effective and easier to disperse birds from an area when they first arrive. Dispersal efforts should be diligent just before the nesting season (February-March). Dispersal during the nesting, brood rearing, and adult flightless stages (May-July) will be very difficult. Don't let the situation become a problem.
5. If birds return to an area after being successfully dispersed, meet them with a hostile reception. Returning birds should be easier to disperse the 2nd and following occasions.
6. Be aware that domestic ducks and geese will attract resident flocks of Canada geese to an area.

Remember that some people may not see your situation as a problem and will not understand why you are harassing "their" geese. It is best to keep neighbors informed of your plans.

For information on good dispersal techniques (some of which require a permit), please visit http://216.27.49.98/pg06_CoexistingWildlife/pg6a_1.htm. Or contact:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
ADC Wildlife Services
6213-E Angus Drive
Raleigh, NC 27613
(919) 786-4480

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Division of Wildlife Management
512 N. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27604-1188
(919) 733-7291

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
NORTH CAROLINA SANDHILLS FIELD STATION

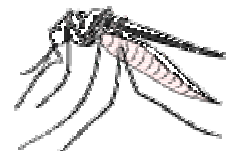


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General Information on WNV in North Carolina

West Nile virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness that is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV by biting humans and other animals, such as horses. First appearing in the U.S. in 1999, WNV has now spread through most of the country. North Carolina found its first case in a bird in 2000 and its first human case in 2002.



WNV flares up during mosquito season - summer and early fall. People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito, if they develop any symptoms at all. Most people who are infected with West Nile - approximately 80 percent - will not become ill. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will display mild symptoms, including fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms typically last a few days. About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis, and often require hospitalization. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious symptoms of WNV if they do get sick. Anyone who may be ill with WNV should see a doctor as soon as possible.

The best way to avoid West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites.

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In mild cases, people experience symptoms such as fever and aches that pass on their own. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital for treatment.

West Nile virus is fatal to several species of birds, including blue jays, crows, cardinals and raptors like hawks and owls. Since 1999, North Carolina and other states have tested dead birds and sentinel flocks of chickens to track WNV activity. By the end of 2002, WNV had been found in virtually every county in North Carolina. Extensive bird testing is no longer necessary, as it is clear that WNV is here to stay. However, the state still tracks reports of dead blue jays, crows, cardinals, hawks and owls to monitor virus activity. If you find a dead bird, don't handle the body with your bare hands. For directions and a reporting form, see Public Health Pest Management's reporting web page. You may also contact your local health department or local animal control office for instructions on reporting and disposing of the bird.